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ABSTRACT

This guidebook is based on telephone interviews, conducted in April and May 1989, with the staff of 19 homeless shelters in California, Delaware, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, Oklahoma, Texas, and Tennessee, site visits at eight New York State shelter programs, and a review of the research on literacy training for homeless adults. The purpose of this guidebook is to relay other practitioners' experiences so that the new program administrator can provide successful literacy training programs for homeless adults. There are many variables in each setting. Some shelters provide training on site; others refer clients to literacy providers. Some shelters are urban; others are rural. Some shelters serve families; others serve men, women, or single parent families. The following sections are included: (1) program structures and resources, including program structure, administration, planning, support services, instruction, and learning technology; (2) recruitment and retention, focusing on what is needed to encourage homeless learners to participate and persevere in literacy training; (3) program content, building on research findings to develop curriculum guidelines for homeless low-literate students; (4) evaluating program outcomes by assessing program accomplishments, their strengths, and weaknesses, with a sample evaluation tool; (5) three sample lesson plans; and (6) a selected bibliography of 33 readings. The three sample lesson plans are on job advertisements, language and literacy skills, and intergenerational reading. (NLA)

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Guidelines for Effective Programs

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The University of the State of New York
The State Education Department
Bureau of Continuing Education Program Development
Albany, New York 12230

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LITERACY TRAINING FOR THE HOMELESS: GUIDELINES FOR EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS

Turning I see no one Noticed,
not one man Blinked in 25 across.
Not one Head twitched from its Restful place,
not one Closed eye opens.

Everyone is A - OK;
all 800 and 50 breathing.
Male units are SHELTERED for the night;
Bedded in a space the size of one City Block.

A dream Comes to Light. I see Clearly a Morn;
Bright and Lovely with 800 and 50 men
Suited in Tailored threads;
Walking out of the Hell chamber,
Getting into cabs (yes) Taxi cabs,
and Going to (places) called (Work) and (Home).

*- **Oswal Martin Marsant**, resident of Sumner House, Bedford-Stuyvesant, New York City*

I. INTRODUCTION

A. This Guidebook

This guidebook is based on telephone interviews, conducted in April and May of 1989, with the staff of 19 homeless shelters in California, Delaware, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, Oklahoma, Texas and Tennessee, site visits at 8 New York State shelter programs, and a review of the research and literature on literacy training for homeless adults that had been published through December 1989.

The purpose of this guidebook is to relay other practitioners' experiences so that the new program administrator can assess the fit of these strategies to his or her own program's clientele, mission, resources, and desired outcomes. Our purpose here is not to make a definitive statement on the 'right way' or the 'wrong way' to provide successful literacy training programs for homeless adults. There are far too many variables extant in each setting. Some shelters provide training on-site; others refer clients to literacy providers. Some shelters are urban; others are rural. Some shelters serve families; others serve just men, just women, or single parent families. There is no one solution.

This book has been prepared for shelter administrators, adult educators, counselors, and volunteers for the homeless. Because the range of material presented is broad in order to serve the needs of all of these professions and interests, some readers will find that they are already familiar with sections of the material. The following summary of guidebook sections may help you determine which sections will be most useful for you and your program.

Section II, Program Structures and Resources, is a compilation of findings from site visits and telephone interviews to relay what many practitioners in the field have found to be important and effective in terms of program structure, administration, planning, support services, instruction, and learning technology. Section III, Recruitment and Retention, focuses on what is needed to encourage homeless learners to participate and persevere in literacy training. Motivation and barriers to participation are discussed. Section IV, Program Content, builds on the research findings from Sections II and III to develop curriculum guidelines for homeless low-literate students. Three sample lesson plans are provided in Section VI. Section V, Evaluating Program Outcomes emphasizes the need to assess how well you are doing, how much your program is accomplishing, where it has strengths, where there are weaknesses. A sample evaluation tool is included. Finally, Section VII provides a selected bibliography of readings that will further assist homeless literacy program providers and instructors.

B. Background Information

Adult basic education (ABE) for the homeless is principally no different than ABE for all adults: it is a process of learning through instruction. The instruction, in whatever form it takes, is conducted to educate adults whose inability to read, write or speak the English language adequately "reduces their chances to obtain or retain employment commensurate with their real ability" (Grotelueschen, Gooler, and Knox 1976, 2).

> To say that adult basic education touches an enormous variety of lives is an understatement. For many individuals adult basic education offers a rare opportunity to improve their pre-

sent condition. To some it provides a chance to confront directly a world made difficult by the need to read, to write and to do arithmetic. To others, the program teaches how to cope, indeed, how to survive in this world. And to still others, the program is people, people who come together to learn and to relate to each other (Grotelueschen, Gooler, and Knox 1976, 1).

Adult basic education for homeless people functions in all of these capacities. For those homeless who are unemployed or underemployed because of low literacy levels, ABE offers the only long-lasting opportunity for release from homeless status. For those who are homeless because of single or multiple debilitating circumstances or occurrences, ABE provides a positive step forward toward coping and surviving under the new life situation. And for all homeless, ABE provides interaction with people who are there to help build skills, knowledge and independence.

Homelessness does not cause illiteracy; rather, illiteracy contributes to the frequency and duration of homelessness. A recent study conducted by Volunteers of America of Greater New York sampled 122 people using reading assessment and word recognition tests of Literacy Volunteers of America. Roughly 60 percent of those tested scored below the grade 5 reading level. A recent Ford Foundation study established a definite causal relationship between poor basic skills and many other social problems, including the inability to obtain better paying jobs.

> The fundamental vocational skill in our society is the ability to read. A person has to be able to read to find out about available jobs, to get a job, to keep a job, to get ahead in a job and to change to another job (Brickell, quoted in Lynch, 1989, 2).

Homeless people are not necessarily unemployed. According to the findings of a Partnership for the Homeless report covering 46 cities, 85 percent of the municipalities reported moderate to substantial increases in the number of working homeless in the past year. About 25 percent of the New York City homeless population works, either part- or full-time, according to the Coalition for the Homeless. But the number of those actually finding independent housing is small. An example of this situation was reported in the *west side SPIRIT* (July, 1989):

> Juan Rodriguez, 25, has been living in the shelter system for five months. Family problems caused him to lose both his day job in a discount variety store and a night job as a security guard. Consequently, he lost his apartment in the Bronx.
>
> He said he came to a shelter in Manhattan two months ago because he wanted to get his life back in shape. Within a month, Rodriguez began working as a $4-an-hour security guard, a job he found through a city program. But despite working overtime, Rodriguez still lives in the shelter.
>
> "It's extremely frustrating," said Bob Holden, an employment counselor. "We can get people $4-an-hour jobs, that's $130 a week. Tell me where they can live for $130 a week in the city."
>
> Holden teaches homeless men and women at the Vera Institute of Justice the basic skills needed to land a job. He says nine out of 10 find, and hold onto jobs as clerks, counsellors, welders or maintenance people.
>
> The jobs are there. His clients work. But one thing hasn't changed: many are still homeless.

Homelessness has been defined as the state of living in a shelter, hotel or other temporary residence, or living with another family. Homelessness is primarily an economic condition. Educational attainment and economic income are highly correlated in this country. Increased educational achievement leads to increased economic achievement levels.

Three different categories of the homeless in our society have been identified, with frequent overlap between the three categories (BCEL, 1988, 4):

- **Situational Homeless** are people who are getting by and even doing well until one unexpected blow levels them. They might be farmers who lose their farms, steelworkers in Western New York, miners in Appalachia, oil workers in Texas, auto workers in Detroit and other dislocated workers whose skills aren't marketable anymore. Sometimes a serious illness or injury may wipe out the bank account or a fire destroys their dwelling. Many families fall into this category. Usually they can get back on their feet with a little help and direction. But sometimes, they can't make it back up and slip instead into the second category.

- **Marginal Homeless** are individuals who drift in and out of homelessness repeatedly. This group includes disadvantaged persons such as high school dropouts, one-parent families, teen mothers, non-

English-speaking immigrants and migrant workers, battered wives, drug and alcohol abusers. With the right kind of sustained, comprehensive help, this group can also return to the mainstream of society.

- **Chronically Homeless** are those with severe psychiatric impairment, the destitute elderly, and persons probably needing some form of minimal supervision and possibly institutionalization all their lives. These people do not belong in shelters, and should have community-supported facilities designed to address their long-term needs.

Many homeless adults suffer from problems of drug or alcohol abuse. A Columbia University study of men arriving at the Franklin Avenue shelter in the South Bronx found that 75 percent of the men surveyed said they were addicted to drugs or alcohol. While alcoholism or mental illness may contribute to lowered chances of obtaining and retaining employment commensurate with their real abilities, recognition of these very substantial barriers does not negate the importance of becoming literate. A frequent political response to substance abuse problems in our culture has been the provision of education. Education about the costs and results of drug use does help to decrease drug use. But when drug users are illiterate to the point of not being able to adequately read, and thus comprehend factual information about drug use, education as a means to decreased drug use is a moot, not viable, solution to the problem.

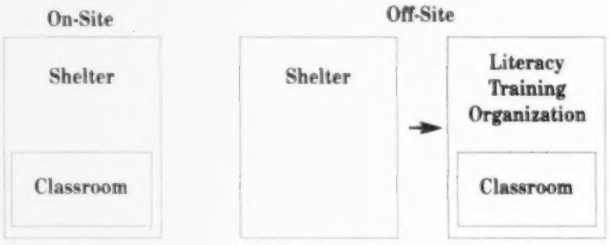
Of all services available to the homeless in New York State and across the country, education is the service most likely to enable the adult to achieve economic independence. The truly valuable services of psychological counseling, subsidized housing and shelters, food services, religious services, and substance abuse referral are all services that help homeless persons to cope with their current situation and status, but may not necessarily provide a means for breaking free of homelessness.

A Chinese proverb says, "Give a man a fish and he has a meal for a night. Teach a man to fish and he can feed his family forever."

II. PROGRAM STRUCTURES AND RESOURCES

A. On-Site versus Off-Site

About two-thirds of the homeless shelters that participated in this study provide literacy training on-site, at the shelter. The remainder provide literacy training through referral to literacy service organizations in the community. Choosing between on-site or off-site training depends on the characteristics and clients of the shelter.



Project Adaptive Literacy (PAL) of the Volunteers of America (VOA) of Greater New York, operating since June 1986 at VOA's Bowery Shelter for homeless recovering alcoholic men and at its Brandon House single residence shelter, also in Manhattan, provides on-site training. VOA's philosophy is to bring all services to the clients:

> In most cases today, services for the homeless are piecemeal. People are expected to go to one place for a meal, another for medical attention, another for clothing, another for housing help, another for tutoring. This is especially hard in areas where transportation is not easily available and when people are worried about where they will spend the night. All of VOA's programs for the homeless are multiservice and 90 percent of its clients' needs are met at the shelters. Education efforts have the greatest chance of success if they take place where people get 24-hour help.

But this doesn't hold true for all populations in all shelters. As VOA admits, "To many homeless, being an alcoholic is more socially acceptable than being illiterate." For many illiterate homeless, their lack of educational skills is a carefully hidden secret. The Massachusetts Career Development Institute programs in Springfield, doing one-to-one tutoring with adults, wanted to provide on-site training but found that students felt embarrassed about admitting to others that they did not know how to read. Similarly, residents of that program were offered an AA program on-site and they asked instead that it be provided off-site at a location they could easily reach.

The Salvation Army program in Wilmington, Delaware, provides literacy assessment on-site but refers clients to an ABE program in the community. The Wilmington staff found, however, that people lost interest in going to ABE classes. Specifically, low motivation and low self-esteem are the main deterrents seen in pursuing ABE at an off-site location. Having people come in "is a really positive idea" for the administrators of this shelter.

One way that the Massachusetts Career Development Institute found to increase participation in off-site programs is to provide rewards for persistence and participation. Homeless students in the program are provided with monthly city bus passes as long as they continue regular attendance at the literacy classes. These bus passes, good for travel at any time, as often as desired, on the city's buses, are of great value to clients who are looking for jobs, and traveling to other sites for medical and social services. The bus passes gained through participation in the ABE/GED programs permit them to access other services as well as to visit family and friends. If attendance falls, the bus passes are not renewed.

B. Support Services

With almost unanimous agreement, literacy providers for the homeless stress the need to provide child care during ABE or GED classes. The Salvation Army program in St. Louis stresses the need to decrease effective barriers to participation. St. Louis provides monthly bus passes in urban areas and transportation in rural areas to encourage attendance at ABE classes. "Transportation and child care are necessities if you provide services off-site," Crystal Lyle, assistant to the program director, insists.

Casa San Francisco in Milton, Delaware, recommends that shelters provide child care, allowing parents and children to come to the same site. Some very progressive programs are providing literacy training through intergenerational programs: children and adults both receive training. This is of current and future value because research suggests that low literacy in families tends to recur in succeeding generations (BCEL, April 1989, 1):

> Children who grow up in homes where parents do not read, or read only marginally, lack the role model provided by a literate parent. They lack early exposure to reading by not having stories read to them by a parent. They do not see books or print materials around the house. There is little use for these things in homes where adults cannot read, or where they may be too poor to buy them even if they can read. Some children do not even have homes; they make up a growing share of the homeless.
>
> Non-reading parents cannot help their children with homework. When asked for help, they may brush the children aside because they are embarrassed or insecure about their own literacy skills. The children may interpret this to mean that school is thought to be unimportant. (For most parents this is far from the case; they are ashamed of their own lack of schooling and do not want their children to suffer their own educational limitations.) These parents are not the ones who show up at PTA meetings or go to see the teacher when a child's report card is poor. They may be unable to read the report card or interpret what it means. They may be too intimidated or disconnected from the school to go where they themselves failed or experienced humiliation.

Intergenerational reading relies on a powerful motivational tool and an enjoyable instructional approach (Handel & Goldsmith 1989, 24). The motivational factor is the parents' concern for their children's welfare. The instruction consists of reading and discussing children's literature, classic and contemporary stories, picture books, poetry, and nonfiction books, "books too seldom known or read in low-literate or low-income homes...Reading aloud, discussing books, and listening to stories are part of the experience."

C. Necessary Skills of Program Staff

Effective ABE provision for the homeless requires that programs and teachers have two major competencies: the teaching skills necessary to provide ABE training for adults, and an understanding of and ability to relate to homeless peoples (Grotelueschen, Gooler, and Knox 1976, 4). The program curriculum is one aspect of an effective literacy program. The second aspect is more aptly defined as a counseling function.

The ABE and GED instructors and program administrators do more than teach homeless adults. Formal and informal literacy assessment through intake interviews and standardized tests, placement and evaluation testing and interviews, referrals to other service providers, recruitment and retention of

learners, personal advisement, and simply listening to and learning about clients are important. Successfully melding the selection and creation of instructional materials with the homeless adult's current needs and interests can lead to greater persistence and achievement for the learners. This is permanent achievement.

D. Educational Technology

There is quite a variety of educational and learning technology used in literacy training programs for the homeless. In Oklahoma, a new program has just been initiated that was developed by the Department of Libraries using videotapes and books up to the sixth grade reading level. The videotapes are designed to teach the majority of the material. Volunteers come in to work with illiterate homeless students twice each week to monitor progress and help with learning problems. These volunteers are trained by Literacy Link, part of the State's Department of Libraries. They, like many other programs, have more students than tutors. The use of the interactive videotapes is being implemented to try to provide more training for greater numbers of homeless illiterates or low literates with the minimal number of tutors who are available. (Note: This program has only recently been initiated. No evaluation data exists.)

Similarly, the Westchester County programs, in New York at the Rochambeau School in White Plains, include a job training/literacy training interactive computer series, JSEP, developed by the military to further train and educate United States military personnel. Students work at their own paces, at their own computer terminals. Feedback from the program is rapid and instructional. In much the same way that video games are "addictive" for youngsters, the adult learners seated at the JSEP terminals did not volunteer to give up their seats until after their allotted time had expired and they had been asked to finish up and leave (some were asked several times before they ended their lessons and left the workroom).

In many other programs, especially those that are offered at shelters rather than at community literacy training centers, materials are few and basic. Simple libraries of a few dozen books, instructional texts and workbooks, and a smattering of general interest magazines are a common selection of resources for homeless literacy programs.

E. GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPING AN EDUCATION PROGRAM FOR THE HOMELESS

(1) Identify your community's homeless and their literacy and education needs. Knowing who you are serving and what they seek when entering adult literacy classes is of the utmost importance in planning an effective program.

(2) Develop a philosophy and goals to guide your program operations and set the direction for program development.

(3) Assess the support service needs of your homeless ABE and GED learners. What services can your program provide directly (child care, transportation, etc.) and which services can be obtained through other community agencies? Build alliances with other community service agencies to provide and request referrals.

(4) Develop a plan for staff development and selection. What skills will teachers, tutors and administrators need to have in order to accomplish your program goals?

(5) Research and select available learning materials based on your community's needs and your program's goals.

III. RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF HOMELESS LEARNERS

A. Review of Research

Several studies have examined the attrition and persistence of students enrolled in adult basic education literacy programs. While most have not been conducted in homeless shelters, the findings are in many cases transferable and helpful to us in our understanding of recruitment and retention activities in literacy programs for homeless populations.

One basic theme of retention studies in low-literate or illiterate adults is the barrier of low self-image. Educationally disadvantaged adults are more likely to lack self-confidence and self-esteem, have negative attitudes toward education, and need mastery of basic skills before attaining job skills that could improve their economic circumstances (Kerka 1988). Special attention should be given to developing and using strategies to deal with students' low self-confidence,

perception of social disapproval, situational barriers, and negative attitudes in planning recruitment and retention strategies for homeless adults.

Huey B. Long, professor of adult education at the University of Georgia, notes:

> In the last ten years adult educators, gerontologists, and psychologists have shown increasing interest in the association of variables other than age with learning ability. These include physical conditions (for example, health, energy levels and sensory integrity), personality variables (including interests and motives), and social class (Long 1983, 63).

These are factors that contribute to the adult's learning ability once the adult is enrolled in a program. In addition to these achievement-related factors, there are barriers and motivators to the initial enrollment and participation in educational programs. Long cites five barriers to educational participation for adults: family responsibilities, lack of access to educational facilities, money, time, and motivation (Long 1983, 111):

> The voluntary nature of adult learning activities places a heavy burden upon the planner and administrator of such activities. Because adults engage in organized learning activities with limited external compulsion, educators are severely challenged to identify not only obstacles for enrollment, but also obstacles to voluntary participation....

One study, conducted in St. Paul, Minnesota with a population of 1407 ABE learners, concluded that "students who were unemployed but available for work were more likely to drop out than were other students" (Bosma, 1988). This is especially a problem for homeless adults, many of whom are unemployed and available for work. Many homeless unemployed workers join literacy programs as a stop-gap until they are able to locate a job. Often the only reason for beginning literacy training is to be able to obtain employment. When a job opportunity appears, the student will often leave the program to accept the available job. But strategies have been devised to encourage persistence of homeless literacy students.

A study conducted at Coastal Carolina Community College in Jacksonville, North Carolina, presents a number of strategies for increasing the retention of ABE learners. These include: (1) student contact (excessive absence referral list, student consultations, no-show interviews, partial dropout consultations, incoming student consultations), (2) special projects (schedule changes, spring quarter minisurvey), (3) networking activities (instructor interaction, human service agency interaction), and (4) other activities including car pool, orientation, reception, newsletter, and volunteer tutors.

Volunteers of America bases its success in retaining adult illiterate and low-literate learners on the one-to-one, person-to-person focus of their educational programs. Volunteers are individually matched with a shelter resident. These two will work together, as a team, for as long as the volunteer remains with VOA or until the homeless person leaves the shelter, whichever occurs first. Students and tutors are matched according to compatibilities in personalities, interests, hobbies, work and personal backgrounds. Student curricula are designed by individual students and their assigned tutors. Progress is monitored through the implementation and evaluation of weekly or monthly lesson plans. These lesson plans are written by the tutors with input from students.

A study from Kingsborough Community College in Brooklyn, New York, found that making personal contact with potential students and using verbal and nonverbal communication techniques to convince potential students that they could succeed in the literacy program were found to be the keys to successful student recruitment campaigns (Balmuth 1986). What an instructor or staff member says through gestures and expressions to a potential student can be more potent that what is said in words. Adult learners are a sensitive group, not proud of their illiteracy and not willing to be ridiculed because of it.

Understanding the needs of the homeless learner is helpful in designing program materials and mission. A Canadian study of low-literate and illiterate adults in Edmonton concluded that attrition was high because literacy was not a goal of the students. Most of the students were not interested in literacy in and of itself; rather, they viewed literacy as a stepping stone. Most students wished to upgrade as quickly as possible and find employment. Their goal was not to achieve 12th- or even 9th-grade literacy. This finding, combined with the knowledge that those learners looking for work were most likely to leave before completing a program, helps us to understand how ABE learners view their education and its purposes.

A 1988 study based on in-depth interviews with 15 low-literate ABE students identified the following literacy tasks and ranked them according to the degree to which the learners believed they needed to learn them (Hayes & Valentine 1989):

ITEM	RANK
Filling out an income tax form	1
Reading and using road maps and city maps	2
Reading and using a thermometer	3
Using a checking account at a bank	4
Budgeting your money	5.5
Helping children with schoolwork	5.5
Reading the Bible	7
Reading and using a voting ballot	8
Filling out job applications	9
Reading medicine labels	10
Reading apartment leases	11
Reading advertisements in a newspaper	12
Reading and using cooking recipes	13
Reading and using coupons	14
Reading and using a telephone directory	15
Reading and using a bus or train schedule	16
Comparing prices in a supermarket	17
Reading your mail	18
Reading street and traffic signs	19
Reading and ordering from a restaurant menu	20

Knowing the educational goals of homeless learners will enable instructors to design curricula that is fitted to the students' needs and, as such, is supported by their goals and motivations.

A very useful model for understanding adult motivation and persistence in education was proposed by Kenneth Howard, a professional skills trainer from a private corporation (Howard 1989, 205-207):

> Increasing and maintaining learner motivation is a fundamental concern of adult educators. One might broadly conceptualize learning situations as having three stages, each with a different motivational focus: Pre-Learning (i.e. the period immediately prior to the learning situation), Learning (i.e. the actual learning situation), and Post-Learning (i.e. the period immediately following the learning situation). In the Pre-Learning stage, prospective learners must be motivated to become initially involved in learning. In the Learning stage, learners must be motivated to continue and take an active part in learning activities. In the Post-Learning stage, learners must be motivated to apply what they have learned....

Prelearning: Motivating Initial Involvement

To motivate learners to become involved in a specific learning project (to recruit students), the adult educator must persuade them that (a) the learning tasks are within their ability to perform, given reasonable effort...(b) successful performance of these tasks will be rewarded, both in the learning situation and in practical application...and (c) the reward will satisfy their needs....

Learning: Motivating Continued Involvement

During this stage, learner motivation is much more fluid and may be influenced by actual experience in the learning situation. Learners' initial motivation may decrease if their experience in the learning situation leads them to believe (a) that they cannot perform the learning tasks...(b) that learning task performance will not translate to performance on the job...(c) that performance will not be rewarded in either the learning situation or in the practical settings...or (d) that the rewards will not satisfy their needs....

Postlearning: Motivating Application of Learning

In the Post-Learning stage, the learners must be motivated to apply the skills learned. Learners' motivation may decrease if they develop the perception that (a) learning task performance will not translate to actual performance, (b) actual performance will not be rewarded, or (c) the rewards will not satisfy their needs. The problem of maintaining motivation can also be dealt with by breaking up the program into a series of sessions, interspersed with opportunities for practical application. This gives the learner the opportunity to "phase in" actual performance in small, achievable steps, thus undergirding self-esteem and building an objective, experiential foundation on which to base expectancies.

In other words, it takes more than encouragement for a student to show up for the first class. This is the

first step toward literacy provision. It is equally, if not more, important to motivate the learner to remain in the class, to absorb and synthesize the information presented, to find value in the accomplishment, and to want to return for continued education and progress.

The twin task of attempting to eliminate barriers to participation and to simultaneously provide incentives for participation is not a simple one. Several things need to be known about your shelter's population and resources before recruitment and retention strategies can be planned and implemented. Basic research conducted by shelter staff is immensely valuable for developing a list of the major deterrents to participation in literacy training for homeless persons who are eligible for the ABE or GED programs. What types of reasons do they give for not wanting to participate?

Secondly, what types of experiences in your ABE/GED classes or sessions cause them to prematurely drop out? How many students begin classes but do not complete them? The majority of students who leave adult basic education courses without reaching their goals do so within the first few hours of the program (Fellenz & Conti 1986, 1):

> In fact, several studies have indicated that well over 50% of such drop-outs occur within the first 6 hours. It would seem that these potential adult students feel that their interests and concerns are not being met by the program or that they are not willing to expend the effort that appears necessary in order to reach their goals.

Understanding why students opt to leave is prerequisite to planning any interventions to decrease attrition.

A retention, or persistence, problem that is particular to shelter populations is the relationship between length of shelter stay and time spent in ABE/GED training. The St. Louis Salvation Army has a 60-day residence limit. After two months, residents are moved from the shelter. In order to compensate for this, contact is maintained for one full year after shelter residence ends. Ex-residents may continue their classes for this one-year period. The shelter maintains a weekly or monthly follow-up consultation. They report a good rate of retention. Transportation and child care services are made available to all learners.

The Massachusetts Career Development Institute reports that they see a lot of fear of success in their ABE/GED learners. Retaining 32 of an original 39 program enrollees, administrators believe that their success is due to large doses of personal attention and care-giving. Continuous support is necessary. Fear of success is very real for many illiterate and low-literate adults. Most have adapted to their literacy status, have a sense of community and self-identity based upon their educational skills, and fear the unknown "person" who would "take their place," change their relations with others, and magically appear in their own bodies as they become literate. Literacy is not associated with self. It is not a comfortable concept. Because it is unknown and thought to be powerful, it can be frightening.

The Syracuse, New York, Rescue Mission bases all of its programs on trust. A relationship with staff members is developed. Shelter residents and nonresidents both are eligible for literacy training, provided at the shelter site. After leaving the shelter, an administrator explains, many still return to continue ABE lessons. In Albany, New York, a city school district based literacy organization, The Adult Learning Center, sends teachers into shelters to conduct ABE/GED training. After shelter residents find homes or move from the shelter, they are still eligible to continue basic education at the Adult Learning Center (ALC) offices and classrooms in downtown Albany. ALC maintains a tracking system to record progress of adult learners regardless of their living situation.

In White Plains, New York, the Westchester County literacy training programs provide ABE/GED and job training at a single location available to shelter residents as well as to those with homes. The White Plains program does not separate the homeless learners from the other basic skills learners. Education director Andy Morzello explains, "We thought, at first, that the homeless were different, but learned that they're not. This program integrates homeless students into all classes. Homeless have problems, but their problems are no different than other students' in the literacy program. We have to go beyond this label, this stigma."

When a group of single men at the NYC Board of Education shelter program at Sumner House, in Bedford-Stuyvesant, were asked why they chose to participate in the ABE/GED and life skills training, their responses were

— to get us back into society; this teaches us how to budget, manage our money.

— to build dignity and pride in yourself.
— that now we are like a little family; there is much more motivation.
— that we can sit down as intelligent adults and talk; we can be ourselves here.
— that here you can be you and motivate yourself and others; "you fall back into who you are."
— that this is geared to get you back out there.
— that this is the key to building self-confidence.
— that we can find out information about jobs, how to write resumes, how to interview and dress for interviews.
— that "some of us need help mentally", some of us don't know how to reach out for help, how to manage our money, don't know anything about our bodies or our health.
— that we have an educational system, we've got this facility. Only five percent will come in here. Those five percent are the ones who want to do something.
— that the general attitude here is distrust. In putting out our newsletter (this shelter program produces its own newsletter), the shelter administration was very suspect about the content.
— that you're on your own here; this program is different (it allows independence).

B. GUIDELINES FOR RECRUITING AND RETAINING ADULT LEARNERS

(1) Recognize that many low-literate adults have low self-confidence, do not see themselves as successful learners, and harbor negative attitudes toward education. These, and many external factors, inhibit their ability to enter and progress through literacy training programs without assistance and support.

(2) Work with adult learners, to help them see and achieve their goals. Maintain a high level of personal interaction and continually encourage and reinforce student persistence.

(3) Increasing and maintaining learner motivation involves action at three conceptual stages: (1) prelearning motivation – wanting to become a learner, (2) learning motivation – believing that one can achieve as a learner, and (3) postlearning motivation – application of current learning leading to reinforcement of one's image as a successful learner. Plan and provide for each of these three stages.

IV. PROGRAM CONTENT

A. Content Needs

It is a commonplace to observe that adult students who have made the decision - however waveringly - to return to the classroom to learn basic literacy skills or pursue the GED do so with a network of fears, frustrations, anxieties, expectations, and motivations that can both enhance and frustrate the educational process. The teacher, aware of this complex intermingling of frequently conflicting motives and feelings, should attempt to build on those motives and feelings which might enhance success, and mitigate those fears which tend to retard or even destroy it. This is especially true on the crucial first night (Rachal 1985, 42).

Teachers, administrators and researchers unanimously agree that "hands-on" work in areas of immediate value to adult basic skills learners is the most effective curriculum for homeless low-literate and illiterate students. Again, it is important to incorporate the motivational aspects of prelearning, learning and postlearning in order to help students participate, learn, see their progress, feel rewarded and continue learning.

Researchers at Northern Illinois University (Quigley & Oddgeirsson 1984) believe that teachers must develop content based on the lives and realities of the learners:

> Adult basic education (ABE) teachers are committed to understanding their students and to teaching something useful, something relevant, and something that will give students more control over their world or community. The goal of ABE teachers then must be to be familiar with their students' understanding of the world. ABE teachers are logically the best ones to define much of the.content and most of the teaching process.... Bringing the community into the classroom has these benefits: effective learning, effective programming, better student attendance and retention, and mutual learning. Drawbacks to this approach include

use of more teacher energy, poor student/teacher perceptions, and difficulty in evaluating adults' learning.

Other research findings indicate that successful programs share the following characteristics: (1) longer-term efforts as opposed to short-term, (2) intensive pre-employment counseling, (3) a combination of training and academic assistance, (4) emphasis on basic academic skills, (5) self-paced or staff-intensive training, and (6) collaborative relationships with other agencies and programs (Martin 1987).

B. Curriculum Development

In addition to selecting and developing instructional materials that meet homeless learners' needs, program administrators and designers should consider what materials to include at each stage of the program. Knox offers the following planning guidelines for sequencing materials in *Helping Adults Learn*, (1986, pp. 124-125).

1. *Start with objectives.* Materials are most effective when you begin with specific objectives for each session or unit and then (using your familiarity with learners, content, and materials) select or develop those materials likely to best serve the educational purposes. Such materials will be part of the program design or redesign and not just an add-on.

2. *Consider learner preferences.* Many adults with little formal education depend heavily on listening and observing; those with more education make more use of reading; those with learning disabilities may compensate by using the abilities they have. Varied educational materials allow learners to use their preferred modes of information-seeking and to broaden the ways they learn.

3. *Provide choice.* Alternative materials that differ in emphasis and complexity result in program flexibility and responsiveness to learners. Participants can then select materials that are relevant and challenging to them, set their own pace, and maintain interest through variety.

4. *Present relevant content.* Learning persistence is increased by interesting materials that are not too difficult. Examples of such materials from participants' lives include procedural guides, repair manuals, job application or tax forms, newspapers, magazines, and cookbooks. Such material can be provided or suggested by participants themselves and by people in various related roles.

5. *Focus on basics.* Many potential materials contain too much confusing detail. You can increase learning efficiency by reducing the overload of unnecessary detail and excessive categories, by helping learners process new information by clarifying what they already know about the topic, and by establishing a useful mind-set based on fundamental concepts and procedures on which they can add details.

6. *Provide opportunities for review.* Throughout a program, materials can be used for varied repetition and easy review, combined with immediate and anonymous feedback. Such review promotes both learning and learning how to learn.

7. *Include questions.* Materials can pose questions which encourage learners to process ideas by raising study questions, by presenting content to be questioned, and which might be applied or used in practice. A question-and-answer format is useful for many educational materials, as it parallels the dialogue that many adults use in informal learning projects that entail conversations, observations, and even silent dialogues in which many people engage when reading a book or listening to a talk.

8. *Encourage application.* Materials can help adults use what they learn by providing something new to apply, by providing opportunities to practice doing so soon after acquisition, by clarifying expectations about use of content, and by encouraging application by use of suggestions and guidelines.

As Malcolm Knowles has pointed out, helping adults to learn how to continue learning beyond the current program, to be able to perform well in the current program and to be better able to engage in successful self-directed learning activities in the future, is the ultimate goal of your program (Knowles 1980).

Following Howard's principles of motivation, the following recommendations are made:

Adult educators should attempt to build success into learning designs. The curriculum should

build on skills that learners already possess. Learning should be steps that are challenging, yet achievable, and the tasks related to the practical setting. A variety of opportunities for performing should be offered, allowing for different learning styles and incorporating both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards. Successful performance builds learner motivation directly, through experience in the learning situation, and indirectly, building self-esteem.

The adult educator should attempt early in the program to engage individual learners in explicit goal setting, focusing on clarifying expectancies regarding the learning situation. Specifically, the focus should be on whether the program will accomplish the learner's goals and whether the learner can – with reasonable effort – achieve the learning objectives. Learning contracts are ideal for such goal-setting activities...(Howard 1989).

Learner practice should be followed with immediate, constructive feedback from the adult instructor and other learners. Clear ground rules for feedback, set early in the program, allow for reinforcement of learner expectancies that effort will in fact result in successful performance in the learning tasks.

V. EVALUATING PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Like many other activities, formal evaluation is widely endorsed and seldom pursued. Endorsement of evaluation, like endorsement of regular visits to the dentist, is reasonably comfortable; actual involvement in evaluation (like an actual visit to the dentist) often is not (Groteleuschen, Gooler, and Knox 1976, 20).

Three reasons for conducting formal evaluation have been identified. The first is that evaluation is often mandated, required by the funding agency that supports the education program. The second reason for conducting formal evaluation is to justify what is being done. Justification evaluation often highlights the good aspects of a program, arguing for its continuation.

The third reason for formal evaluation is to improve or change a program. Data about the program are collected through surveys, observations and interviews with students, teachers, administrators and any others who are involved (counselors, advisors, etc.) in order to draw a clearer picture of which program goals are actually being accomplished, which outcomes were not desired or planned but are showing up, and to learn how each constituent in the program perceives it. Generally, these data are passed on to administrators and teachers who are in a position to make decisions about changes and to implement changes.

Some of the positive outcomes of conducting formal evaluation are

- accuracy of diagnosis,
- ability to demonstrate fulfillment of accountability,
- increased communication among staff,
- increased knowledge of outcomes,
- increased ability to advocate a position (Groteleuschen, Gooler, and Knox 1976, 20-31).

One study (Darkenwald & Valentine 1985) found that measuring how and to what extent students benefit from participation in adult basic education is methodologically difficult. Follow-up studies, those that ask students how the program benefitted them after they have completed it and gone on to implement the knowledge they gained, are difficult because they require that changes over time be detected and that the changes be directly attributed to the program itself. Darkenwald and Valentine recommend pre-post or time series evaluation.

A. General Outline for Evaluation Process

(1) Review mission statement of the purpose(s) for your program that were developed in the initial proposal or description of your program.

(2) List each of the goals of your program. These may include specific reading, writing, mathematics, life skills, self-esteem, life management goals for the homeless adults who participate.

(3) Assess each one of these goals in your evaluation of the program's effectiveness. Information to be gained through formal evaluation does go beyond basic measurement of grade level achieved IF your program states that other educational and program goals exist. Darkenwald and Valentine's study found that when students were asked, "Taking everything into account, what is the most important benefit you gained from participating in the adult edu-

cation class?", the most striking finding was the large proportion of students who reported indirect, affective outcomes related to self-confidence or self-esteem rather than GED completion or grade level attainment. (Their responses follow: academic improvement, 39.4 percent, enhanced self-confidence/esteem, 32.3 percent, GED or high school diploma, 10.0 percent, job-related benefits, 9.0 percent, enhanced interpersonal skills, 5.0 percent, and other, 4.3 percent).(Darkenwald and Valentine 1985, 22).

(4) Gather information about actual outcomes, perceptions, and attitudes from program students, staff, teachers, and others who can contribute to an understanding of the actual outcomes (number and extent) of your program.This can be done through any combination of interview, survey, or observation that you find to be effective.

B. GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATING PROGRAMS

(1) Identify expected outcomes and how they will be measured.

(2) Identify all outcome measures that are objective and quantifiable.

(3) Measure effectiveness regularly.

(4) Assess the effectiveness of the program in achieving stated objectives.

(5) Include staff and students in the evaluation process, evaluating the materials and teaching methods chosen, student receptivity to content, and students' changes in attitude toward the educational process..

(6) Use feedback from each evaluation to improve program practices and future outcomes.

VI. SAMPLE LESSON PLANS

The following three lesson plans are designed to motivate low-literate adults to actively engage in literacy training that meets their needs, is clearly defined in terms of expectancies, and is simultaneously a positive social experience for all persons involved in the classroom setting.

Sample Lesson One is for male and female, parent and nonparent adults. This lesson focuses on meeting the students' needs by providing reading comprehension skills for understanding newspaper job advertisements. It also meets academic needs by providing students with an understanding of the components and composition of an effective job advertisement. Both reading and writing activities comprise this sample lesson.

Sample Lesson Two is also for all low-literacy adult potential learners. This lesson is planned as an introductory session, a first- or second-day lesson. The goal of this sample lesson is to present the "big picture" of literacy as a skill or set of skills rather than as a measure of intelligence or potential. Remembering that most attrition of adult learners occurs within the first six hours of class attendance, this lesson is designed to counter the anxiety and discomfort adults may experience that would lead to greater attrition. Increased self-esteem and self-motivation are likely following use of this sample lesson.

Sample Lesson Three is an intergenerational lesson for parents of young children. Parents may be single or share parental duties with a partner or spouse, but participation requires that the parent have significant and regular contact with her/his children.

A. Sample Lesson One: Job Advertisements

Time Needed: One 2-hour session

Goal: To provide practice in reading and assessing job advertisements in newspapers and other publications, and to assess students' own job skills, desires and abilities.

Outcome Objectives: The learner will increase his/her skill at reading and comprehending job advertisements and exercise writing skills to create two job descriptions suitable for newspaper publication.

Instructional Materials: Three xerox-enlarged, preselected newspaper job advertisements; teacher-produced want-ad entry forms for student use.

Lesson Planning:

Activity One (five minutes)

(a) Introduction – describe the purpose of this lesson as developing students' skills reading and assessing newspaper job advertisements.

(b) Distribute first job advertisement.

Activity Two (20 minutes)

(a) Have students read first job advertisment aloud.

(b) Discuss the requirements and skills in the ad. Does the applicant need to have a driver's license? flexible hours? good appearance? a high school diploma or GED? other job characteristics listed in the ad?

(c) Assess fit to see if any/all students would be interested or qualified applicants for the first job.

(d) Repeat activity for the second and third job ads. Choose job ads that vary in content, focus, and desirability. Don't be afraid to include a job ad that no one in class would want to apply for. Look for unique and interesting ads with a variety of vocabulary.

Activity Three (15 minutes)

(a) Analyze the components of the three job ads. What do they have in common?

(b) List components on chalkboard, i.e., job title, description of duties, requirements of applicants, salary and hours, address/telephone and name of employer, etc.

(c) Discuss why each of these components is important to the usefulness and effectiveness of the newspaper ad. What might happen if each/any of these components wasn't included in the ad?

Activity Four (40 minutes)

(a) Distribute want ad entry forms to each student.

(b) Ask students to write a newspaper ad for a job they would want to have and would qualify to apply for. Remind students of the need to include all components.

(c) Have students read aloud their completed job ads. Allow flexibility of control, permit other students to comment on the job ads that were created.

(d) Distribute second ad entry form to each student.

(e) Ask students to write a description for a job they would never want to apply for. Again, all advertisement components must be included. Permit humor and creativity.

(f) Have students read aloud their completed job ads. Permit discussion and feedback from other students.

Activity Five (25 minutes)

(a) Have students choose one of their two job ads for class study.

(b) Have students, one at a time, write their chosen job ads on the board.

(c) With class participation, improve grammar and correct spelling errors in each ad. Have authors correct written copy at their seats. Check, using student guidance, whether all ad components were included in the composition.

Activity Six (15 minutes)

Review what was learned about reading, assessing and writing job ads. Encourage students to bring in job ads that they read in the newspaper and that may be of interest to them or the class.

B. Sample Lesson Two: Language and Literacy Skills

Time Needed: One 2 1/2 – hour meeting.

Goal: To teach and reinforce that reading and writing proficiency is a skill to be learned, not a measure of intelligence or potential. Literacy can be attained; it is not reserved in this country for a chosen few.

Outcome Objectives: Adults will learn that literacy skills can be attained through an open, persevering maintenance of effort and achievement and that attaining those skills is rewarding.

Instructional Materials: Film (or videotape) of the 1984 commercial movie, *Moscow on the Hudson*, movie projector or VCR, and monitor.

Lesson Planning:

Activity One (10 minutes)

(a) Introduction – define literacy as a set of skills, that we can all attain, at any age, that allows us to have and use more options and opportunities. Like any skill, it takes time and continued effort and practice to become proficient.

(b) Ask students to suggest other skills that take time and practice in their lives (cooking a terrific meal, working on a car/motorcycle, using a subway/bus map and schedule, budgeting monthly money well, etc). Have students discuss skills they already possess.

Activity Two (five minutes)

(a) Introduce movie to be shown. *Moscow on the Hudson* is a recent movie about a Russian circus musician (played by Robin Williams) who defects at the last minute to America. He has many skills to learn in order to become culturally literate in America. This film is pleasant, upbeat, realistic, sometimes touching, funny, and encouraging.

(b) Ask students to look for the skills that the Russian musician learns as he begins to fit into New York City and American life. Let them know that you will discuss the skills they identify at the end of the film.

Activity Three (115 minutes)

Show film.

Activity Four (15 minutes)

Identify, with students, the cultural literacy skills that the movie character learned. Allow comments, discussion, and some amount of relating by students as time allows.

Activity Five (five minutes)

(a) Closure - repeat definition of literacy as a set of skills.

(b) Encourage students to decide that literacy skills are of value to them and worth working toward. Invite students back to next class session to begin working on those skills.

C. Sample Lesson Three: Intergenerational Reading Aloud

Time Needed: One 2-hour session as the beginning of a continuing sequence.

Goal: To provide low-literate homeless adults who are parents and have a significant amount of contact with their young children an opportunity to develop their own reading skills by studying and preparing children's stories that can be read aloud and taught to their children.

Outcome Objectives: The learner will increase her/his own reading and speaking skills, work to increase interest in an acceptance of reading as an activity in her/his home or family, and assist young children in becoming readers.

Instructional Materials: Books that have been written and prepared to motivate and assist the adult learner to read to her/his young child. One such set of books is produced by New Reader Press, Box 131, Syracuse, New York 13210, 1-800-448-8878 (1-800-624-6703 within New York). Also a storyteller, an adult who will read aloud to the students and who has an understanding of the basic history and uses of storytelling over time.

Lesson Planning:

Activity One (10 minutes)

(a) Introduction – define the purpose of this class as being intergenerational. Point out that there are two goals for the attending parents: (1) to improve their own reading comprehension skills so that they can be more helpful in teaching their young children to read, and (2) to improve their oral reading and storytelling skills.

(b) Get acquainted with the class. Ask each student to identify himself/herself and give the name(s) and age(s) of their child(ren). Teacher should note these names.

(c) Talk informally with students, noting two or more parents who may have a three-year-old boy, for example, or a five-year-old girl, etc. Allow students to chat among themselves noting their family similarities and interests.

Activity Two (30 minutes)

(a) Distribute reading materials.

(b) Ask students to read aloud. Encourage all efforts.

(c) Permit each student t.. read aloud more than once.

Activity Three (40 minutes)

(a) Introduce dimension of reading aloud clearly and enunciating words and sounds. (This will continue to be of use in future reading classes for word discovery and comprehension.)

(b) Introduce guest storyteller to class. Review quickly the students' names and their children's sex and ages.

(c) Storyteller will talk a little about the history and craft of storytelling, its role in folklore, education, and cultural continuation.

(d) Storyteller will read a story to the class.

(e) After the story, class will discuss some of the characteristics of the way the story was related. Was it interesting? Where was it exciting, scary, sad? Did the storyteller's voice change help?

(f) Storyteller will read a brief passage several different times changing intonation, enunciation, speed, and emotional interpretation. Students will be asked to comment on which version(s) were best to listen to.

Activity Four (30 minutes)

(a) Students will be given a list of single sentences. Each student will be assigned one sentence.

(b) First he/she will simply read the sentence for word recognition and comprehension. Then the sentence is to be read again as an exciting sentence, then as a scary sentence, then as a questioning sentence. Each student completes this activity with one assigned sentence.

Activity Five (10 minutes)

Wrap-up – review lessons learned. Explain that future classes will focus most of their time on building reading skills and vocabulary but will continue to return to speaking/oral reading skills.

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